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OBJECT ORIENTEDNESS: THE PERSON OR THE THING

BY SAMUEL ABRAMS, M.D. AND PETER B. NEUBAUER, M.D.

Infant observation indicates that there is an individual variation in development characterized by orientedness either toward the animate or toward the inanimate world. These variants, which are manifest as early as the second month of life, influence the surrounds, the continuing developmental processes, and certain aspects of character formation. Each variation in orientedness evokes a preferred way of processing percepts and situations.

I

One obstacle in psychoanalytic developmental research is the difficulty in integrating data derived from infant and child studies with the conceptual discoveries arising out of adult introspection and reconstruction. Hence it was felt that a set of special categories which could coördinate observational findings on the one hand with distinctive psychoanalytic concepts on the other, might well be useful in bridging the two perspectives.

The goal of this paper is to delineate one such category: the disposition toward human-orientedness and thing-orientedness. Such leanings are readily observable in infants and children; at the same time they find their way into psychoanalytic theory by way of the conceptual route of mental representations. We believe that the developmental sequences of such issues can further the understanding of some of the correlates between analytic

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process and the various analyst-analysand relationships. Hence, an examination of the beginnings, thrusts, and influences of such orientations serves observational, theoretical, and therapeutic interests.

At the outset, the propositions of this particular category may be stated as follows:

Infant observation establishes the finding of an individual variation in development characterized by an inclination in orientedness either toward the animate or toward the inanimate world. This variant becomes manifest as early as the second month of life. It casts its impressions on the surrounds, on the continuing developmental process, and on certain aspects of character formation. Such variations in orientedness have this influence because each necessarily evokes a preferred way of processing percepts and situations.

The data support the hypothesis of the existence of a common pool of predisposition out of which emerge currents of relatedness to persons and things. A reciprocal complementarity exists; hence an enhancement of one current compromises that which is available for the alternate stream of engagement.

Evidence from this and other studies supports the view that the tendency toward preference originates in the early caretaker-infant interaction. This interaction is a product of both congenital and environmental determinates.

II

Interest in the dimension of human-orientedness and thing-orientedness has found its way into the scientific literature, although the interest has been scattered among various disciplines and frequently obscured by related issues. Two broad categories exist: research and conceptual. The *research* literature includes findings related to sex differences, activity patterns, twins, the cognitive field, linguistics, and neurology. In addition, relatedness to things and people is an acknowledged central *conceptual* theme on the general psychologic scene, especially within Freudian and Piagetian frameworks.

RESEARCH

Maccoby (1966) describes various studies which suggest that girls and women show a greater *social* propensity than do boys and men (pp. 330-332), thus implying preferred dispositions. Bardwick (1971), in a summarizing review of the object-issue vis-à-vis sex differences, specifically reflects the polarities of 'thing' versus 'human'. She notes, for example, that, 1, boys of six months of age show a 'better fixation response to a helix pattern of lights' while girls at the same age show a better fixation to the human face; 2, female infants have a 'greater responsiveness to social stimuli' and in general are judged as having 'more social orientation'; 3, at thirteen months, males possibly have a better figure-ground differentiation while females continue to show a greater responsiveness to people; and 4, older boys are more inclined to base their self-esteem on achievements, while girls seem more oriented to conformity (p. 94). Bardwick hypothesizes that culture may re-enforce certain fundamental sex-linked tendencies. Her summarizing reflects that thing-orientedness may be more characteristic of males, human-orientedness more characteristic of females, and that each tendency has a continuing influence, although her reviews are neither conceptualized nor grouped precisely along those terms.

Escalona (1963) notes that more active babies need less of a social stimulus to evoke a response than do less active ones. In addition, her data suggest that the more active infants tend to be absorbed more exclusively either with things or people, while the less active ones develop an earlier capacity for coördinated involvement with both kinds of objects. This study suggests that levels of inherent activity may correlate with 'intensity' of human- or thing-object engagement.

A leaning toward humans as opposed to the inanimate world frequently polarizes in monozygotic twins, apparently irrespective of sex or activity type. Allen, Pollin and Hoffer (1971) specifically assert that identical twins can be differentiated from each other within the first year of life by, among other traits, 'a

greater person-orientation (sociability) in one twin and a greater object-orientation in the other' (p. 1601). This study points to the possibility of intra-uterine developmental influences. In discussing their published work, Gifford (1971) confirms and extends such observational data. Illustrating his experience with a pair of identical twin girls, he notes that at age eleven one 'preferred to practice beautiful calligraphy while her talkative sister was more interested in spoken language' (p. 1604). In an earlier, more extensive report, Gifford, et al. (1966) cited distinctions characteristic of this dimension in even greater detail. In the first three months of life, one twin, for example, showed 'an unusual interest in gazing for long periods at nearby inanimate objects, her hands and feet, a design in the crib, and a mobile which she learned how to set in motion at will around 8 weeks' (p. 263). The other twin, during the same time-period, was described as having excitedly discovered her sister. The influence of parental attitudes was offered as one hypothesis to account for the developing differences. In a discussion of this paper, Spitz (1966) commented on the potential advantages and limitations of each emerging trait. He also postulated that such emerging characteristics would have certain specific influences on the subsequent experiencing of life events. It impressed him that the smiling response—a developmental landmark—appeared at the same time in both, despite the different dispositions.

Cohen, et al. (1972) do not confirm the regularity of such findings in certain other sets of monozygotic twins. One conclusion of their work is '... overall competence, coping, assertiveness, and language and social skills' characterized one twin, while fearfulness and dependency characterized the other. However, Apgar and FES (first-week evaluation) scores suggest that the children studied may have had wide 'constitutional' variations. Paranatal factors could be implicated.

Stern (1971) noted different dyadic interactional patterns in a pair of fraternal twins at three and a half months and postulated developmental implications. He suggests that psychodynamic determinants in the mother adversely influenced the

quality of social contact in the second of these twins. Stern highlights the influences of the environmental input.

Cognitive research studies have also reflected these variations in orientedness. Thus, Coates, et al. (1974), in a nursery school setting, found that field-independence (as determined by PEFT scores) and analytic cluster were negatively correlated with social participation. In reviewing other works, they noted a regularly recurring correlation between field independence and responsiveness to nonsocial task-related stimuli on the one hand and field dependence and responsiveness to social stimuli on the other. (See also, Fitzgibbons and Goldberger, 1971; Goldberger and Bendich, 1972; Goldberger, 1973.)

The linguistics literature addresses itself to the two leanings. During the initial learning of a language, Nelson (1973) notes that there are some children who seem to be learning to talk about 'things' while others learn to talk about themselves and other people. She writes: 'One is learning an object language, one a social interaction language' (p. 22). And, apparently, such differences continue to persist into later life.

Finally, in the neurological literature, there are reports of rare focal cerebral lesions characterized either by an inability to name and recognize animate beings while retaining a capacity for recognizing and naming inanimate ones or by the precise opposite (Nielsen, 1942). Nielsen writes: 'From the standpoint of cerebral localization, it is necessary to distinguish between recognition of animate and inanimate objects because one function is not infrequently lost without the other' (p. 114).

CONCEPTUAL

From the conceptual point of view, in the psychoanalytic literature a preoccupation with human 'objects' is as time-honored as is instinct theory itself. Indeed, Freud's very definition of 'instinctual need' encompasses this as an essential constituent of its meaning (e.g., Freud, 1915). A recognition of the cathectic states of object representations is an integral part of Freudian propositions. The minute developmental sequence of

human object relations has been carefully outlined over the years. A. Freud (1965), summarizing this sequence, uses it as a prototype of her concept of developmental lines (pp. 64, ff.). She also attends to the ontogeny of thing-relations, but in quite a different line, which she labels 'From the Body to the Toy and From Play to Work' (pp. 79, ff.). She notes that the pleasures in achievement exist in 'very young children' linked only secondarily with object (i.e., person) relationships.

Winnicott (1953) spawned a special sector of psychoanalytic literature interested in the 'transitional object'. He hypothesizes a movement of interest within infants from their bodies toward their possessions. He, too, hints at the existence of other possible origins of thing-relatedness, although his primary focus with transitional phenomena is in their use as externalized representatives of significant human personal relationships.

The Piagetian literature on cognition is deeply immersed in the *inanimate*-object world, i.e., toys, blocks, coins, etc. The inanimate 'object concept' is of fundamental importance to Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Six stages in the movement toward 'object constancy' are postulated in his theory, with the resultant achievement of a new capacity for mental representation. The ontogenetic relationship to things and emerging cognitive capacities are intimately fused (see, e.g., Flavell, 1963, or Ginsburg and Oppen, 1969). Cobliner (1965) has offered an integrated summary of the 'object' of academic psychology, of Piaget's 'permanent object', and of Freud's 'libidinal object'. Decarie (1966) has approached the problem of relating the development of the 'concept object' and of 'object relations' by a cross-sectional study of infants reared under different conditions. Fraiberg (1969) has attempted to place the Piagetian concept of 'object constancy' within a psychoanalytic frame of reference.

III

The propositions and hypotheses to be offered in this presentation have been derived from a systematic longitudinal study, which contains multiple facets and aims. One sector of the study,

especially relevant to this investigation, is geared toward the initial and continuing assessment of a group of infants destined for adoption. The assessments encompass both general and highly specific physical and psychologic information, accumulated from diverse sources which include multiple and frequently simultaneous direct observational data, records of interactional contacts with the children, and detailed analyses of sequential film samplings. There are reports of interviews with various caretakers or foster parents prior to adoption as well as process interviews with the adoptive parents. Lastly, there are regular periodic psychologic test records.¹

Information is collected every few months in the first year of life, semi-annually after that until latency, and somewhat less frequently thereafter. The data is then subject to a summarizing synthesis and organization by a staff of researchers who, for the most part, do not themselves have direct contact with the children or their families. The systematic synthesis of data is undertaken primarily within the perspective of the propositions of psychoanalytic metapsychology.

Groupings of observationally-derived data are thus established, and offer opportunities to compare and contrast children at many cross-sectional junctures as well as in a longitudinal span. The influences of 'nature and nurture' can be weighed, functional correlates noted, and the developmental process itself can become a target of specific research focus.

As the study proceeded, it became evident that several special descriptive categories were asserting themselves in the data. Some had been anticipated in the established groupings and thus were built into the original design. However, the category of early and persisting orientedness toward persons or toward things had not been anticipated; it precipitated naturally out of the accumulating information.

To illustrate the variation, longitudinally selective compara-

¹ The Cattell Infant Intelligence Scale was used to age twenty-seven months; the Stanford-Binet to age six years; and the WISC thereafter. Additional tests including projectives were given at ages past three years.

tive observations covering two boys, Alan and Benjamin, will be offered. Features of their growth will be tracked from age four and a half months to six years to demonstrate similarities and differences in the kinds of findings which characterize each respective object leaning. The comparative alignment of data at different developmental time periods permits not only the demonstration of continuity or discontinuity and of the existing functional correlates, but provides the opportunity of discerning subtle shades of differences which might otherwise be obscure. Alan showed an early and definite 'thing-preference' in his object-orientation, Benjamin a 'human-preference'. In these two boys, the movement from disposition to strategy and from strategy to character appears particularly well defined.

Although the data on Alan and Benjamin are described here as beginning at rather a 'late' age (four and a half months), these two boys seem especially suitable as illustrations because of the clarity of the accumulated information and because of the opportunity they offer of demonstrating the feature of continuity over a considerable period of time. Other children in the study set up similarly as matched samplings reflect data of the same sort, some of which have been derived from much earlier time periods, e.g., five weeks of age.

IV

Four and a half months:

This systematic evaluation of Alan and Benjamin occurred while each was with caretakers, awaiting adoption. Even during this early period, it was clear that Alan had a wider range of interests. He would play with his cradle gym, reach for and secure the dangling rings, and readily pull firmly on them. He was inclined to clutch at his own clothing or at anyone else's clothing which might be close at hand in a manner which gave the impression of curiosity and exploration. He could sustain interest in some inanimate item for as long as twenty minutes and caretakers noted that it was possible to distract him from a

state of 'fussiness' simply by offering a new setting or locale where he could explore.

During a comparable period, Benjamin was described as a more difficult child, apparently chiefly because he required a good deal of sustained personal contact. When other infants were about, Alan was inclined to ignore them; he would play with his bib or his clothing or reach for nearby toys. Benjamin in such a setting, on the other hand, was more likely to reach for one of those other infants; he regularly took the initiative in activating any interactions with other infants. Almost all observers emphasized this disposition in Benjamin which in one way or another they described as his 'sociableness', while Alan's strength seemed to lie in his motor capacities—his deftness and his power.

In the initial intelligence testing, Alan's score was 111 while Benjamin's was 90. Those who examined the film sequences of this period had the impression that Benjamin's focus on the psychologist's face during the testing might have interfered with his ability to attend to the inanimate objects offered during the examination.

Five and a half months:

This observation was made in a foster home setting. Placement was nearing for both children. According to his foster parents, Alan was continuing to show a wide range of interests; Benjamin's interests seemed limited to people. When a child was removed from a playpen which he shared with Benjamin for the moment, Benjamin would react and begin to cry; he could be calmed by being picked up by another person with whom he would then become involved. In a similar situation, Alan would merely persevere in whatever activity engaged him at the time, apparently unmoved by the sudden disappearance of the other child.

Alan was noted to show little preference between strangers and his new foster mother—even after some weeks. Benjamin, although pleased by the attention of newcomers, clearly pre-

ferred his foster mother's interest. Alan's vocalizations seemed to produce pleasure in their own right, whereas Benjamin preferentially responded vocally to the sounds of other people—especially to the tones of other infants who might be nearby or the voice of his foster mother. Alan's greater motor capacity persisted and the test difference remained: Alan, 111; Benjamin, 86.

Seven months:

Alan and Benjamin were each formally adopted into different homes before the seven-month observation. In their new settings the patterns which had been established in each persisted. Alan was viewed as only 'moderately' sociable by the visiting observers, although he did seem to be somewhat more responsive to people than he had been in prior observations. He still appeared to differentiate little among persons. The psychologist noted that he made no effort to purposively restore visual contact after his head was covered with a cloth. His newly adoptive parents, however, felt that he was attracted equally to nonhuman and to human objects.

Benjamin, on the other hand, continued to be strongly responsive to people. He 'danced' in his mother's lap, sat in his father's, and in general seemed interested in visitors. He distinguished his new sister with special excitement after a relatively short contact. His parents offered the view that other children seemed to interest him especially. He even proved friendly to the pediatrician while being examined with a fever of 104°. As for the inanimate world, everyone offered the opinion that he was less interested in things than he was in people. He was inclined to quickly mouth new objects or toys after only the briefest initial curiosity, in a manner which suggested more mouth pleasure than item contact. According to the psychologist this impaired his I.Q. test: Benjamin scored 90 while Alan continued with his 111.

Nine months:

At nine months the I.Q. results for both children were reported to be the same: each scored 99. Both lost points they

might have achieved: Alan because of his preoccupation with his pincers grasp and Benjamin because of his continuing propensity to mouth objects. Both were described as responsive to strangers and both made distinctions among visitors. Each expressed a special interest in an older sibling and by this time each regularly turned to his mother for comfort. On a comparative basis, however, Alan was clearly not as interested in people as he was in his own motor activity and in inanimate objects. For Benjamin the human face continued to have its distinctive lure; in general, he interacted more intensively in the social area. He enjoyed being near older children, for example, and in fact was especially taken with a chasing game which developed with a same-age cousin who visited regularly.

During this period, he showed a specific aversion to his maternal grandfather as well as to certain male visitors in general. Summing up her observations of Benjamin, the psychologist wrote: 'Nothing that I could offer him to play with had anything like the valence that the human face had . . . he would much rather inspect me or follow his mother about with his eyes than attend to the cup, rattle, or so forth'. The psychologist's view of Alan, on the other hand, was summed up as follows: 'Though advanced in the visual-motor area, he is rather less so in the personal-social and language areas. . . . In contrast to [his] very moderate development of interest in persons is his intense reaction and interest in things. The hidden string of beads . . . was instantly and purposively retrieved; and having found it, he paid no attention to the vocal applause of his parents. . . .'

Twelve months:

At the one-year observation, both children reflected an enhanced human orientedness which tended to make Alan's behavior a bit more even and incline Benjamin more toward people. Alan's mother reported that on occasion he pounded fiercely at a door that separated him from her; she felt her son was wary of strangers, especially of male strangers. Both boys

were described as tolerant of surrogates during the absences of their parents for short periods and each of them was reported as strongly responsive to his respective sister.

Benjamin developed what was described as a 'violent' attachment to his mother's housekeeper whom he seemed to prefer sometimes over his mother. He was exceptionally clinging and affectionate to his father after a one-day absence. Alan showed no comparable phenomena. It was noted that Benjamin was content to stay in his playpen if there was merely another human being within his view; he was, however, not willing to stay by himself. Alan took a bottle to bed with him; Benjamin preferred a cloth or blanket edge along with his nighttime bottle.

Alan screamed and burst into tears whenever a child took one of his toys; his mother said that he would bang his head when he was unable to retrieve a specific item he coveted. Benjamin tolerated a toy being removed from his area of interest, especially if another was readily available as a replacement. During the psychological testing, it was noted once again that Alan had a 'tremendous interest in the test materials' while Benjamin was not especially interested in them. The I.Q.'s continued to be virtually identical, nevertheless: Alan had a score of 103 (evenly distributed subtests); Benjamin had a score of 105 (more unevenly distributed).

Fifteen months:

At the fifteen-month observation, both boys scored 111 in their testing. The psychologist noted of Alan: 'A quality of deftness and decisiveness is characteristic—except in the interpersonal area'. Of Benjamin she reported an improvement in his motor coördination but remarked how entirely absorbed he was with a photographer's assistant who was present during the testing.

In general, neither of the two boys was noted to have a strong aversion to strangers: both were reported as being inclined to inspect new people without intense reaction. Each was able to stay with surrogate caretakers and each enjoyed play with older

children. Both preferred a strip of cloth to help them fall asleep during this period.

Their thing- and human-proclivities appeared manifest in subtler fashions and along more sophisticated routes. For example, although both showed a quality of persistence while attempting to master a task, the following differences were evident. Alan would stay at it for a while, leave it, and return later in an attempt to complete the task. Benjamin persevered as well, but, when matters became difficult, he regularly called for assistance—seeking the help of another person. The films of this period also emphasized their dispositions. Alan would show an intensity of feeling when some *thing* was taken from him; Benjamin would react when some *one* left. Alan could be distracted from his discomfort with an object and Benjamin by a person.

And finally it was noted that each boy could say exactly five words at age fifteen months. Alan's were Mommy, Dada, hello, goodbye, and *this*—a word he applied to a variety of different inanimate objects. Four of Benjamin's five words were 'people' words: Momma, Daddy, his sister's name, the maid's name, and *no*.

Twenty to twenty-four months:

Both children continued to have similar total I.Q. test scores.

In general each was reported as being attached to his father but nuances of difference were evident. Alan was described as 'sensing' the return of his absent father; in addition, it was reported that he showed a preference for him when both parents were around. Benjamin's attachment to his father was obviously quite intense; he would waken at the mere sound of his father's voice and seemed very sensitive to being even mildly reprimanded by him.

Alan was said to be able to play by himself 'for hours' in his room or in his sister's room. Benjamin, on the other hand, could only play by himself if he was with a group of other children. Alan would respond selectively to his mother's leaving; Benjamin would be upset if any of the four principal characters in

his life would leave. Both could be calmed in their distress: Alan by being distracted by some specific activity, Benjamin by being permitted to be the one to push the button that summoned the elevator for whomever was preparing to leave the apartment.

Alan's language reflected an increasing interest in the naming of objects: his expressive language, however, was below average. Benjamin's expressive language was above average.

Alan's mother described some evidence of his having developed a budding sense of right and wrong. She explained that when he was scolded appropriately he would merely sulk, but if scolded unfairly he would protest loudly. Benjamin's mother described a different process: her son seemed to be developing in the direction of a responsiveness to shame, reacting directly to being caught as well as to a reprimand by another person.

And finally, by the twentieth month, Alan was said to have developed a definite bed ritual involving touching his blanket and mouthing his fingers; Benjamin still liked his cloth at bedtime.

Twenty-seven to thirty-two months:

By now Alan required two plushy bears and a blanket before retiring at night. Benjamin still liked his blanket or cloth, but he began to insist on hugging or kissing his mother as part of a nightly ritual.

The special attachment that each boy showed to his father persisted. Both were increasing their contacts with their sisters and the friends of their sisters. Alan seemed more wary of strangers at this time, while Benjamin was reported as freely going to different people and obviously enjoyed being with them. Observers noted that Alan was 'more engaged with the inanimate' and also 'more organized and independent'. Alan's pleasure in mastery was evident during his play with *things*; Benjamin's was evident in his capacity to divine differences among *people* and use this knowledge to have them do things for him.

When asked about the existence of masturbatory activity during this period, Alan's mother replied, 'I should say not!'. Ben-

jamin's mother reported his playing with his penis in her presence. During this time Alan became preoccupied with riding a bicycle which he preferred to any other toy or activity; Benjamin was said to like any object with moving parts, e.g., a vacuum cleaner.

In the psychological tests, Alan continued to be impressive in his engagement of the materials used in the test; Benjamin showed a special ability to successfully name the various body parts of human figures. Their net scores were the same.

Thirty-six to forty-two months:

Both children were completely toilet trained by forty-two months, although it had taken Alan a few months longer to master urinary control. The description of the training period of each was quite striking. Alan's mother said that he had become fascinated by the task of getting his penis out of the opening of his trousers to make his 'weewee'. Benjamin, during his toilet training, initially wanted everyone present to watch and admire him and his achievements; later, however, he became shy about his toilet tasks and would only permit his father in the bathroom.

Alan appeared to be engaged in a wide variety of exploratory endeavors during this observation period and was described as developing an intense solemn concentration while doing practically anything. Benjamin's mother reported areas of intensity with his human relationships, especially as they involved his sister and his cousin.

Alan would fight with other children over possessions; with peers he was viewed neither as 'follower' nor 'leader' but rather as a 'loner'. Benjamin was actively involved in peer relationships and was thought to be a 'leader' by his mother. He would frequently be engaged in elaborate make-believe games, assuming the role of baby, or mother, or father while participating in 'play-house' games. It was noted that he frequently dramatized the actions of different characters while being read a story. Alan, on the other hand, was described by the psychologist as a 'very

prosaic and reality-oriented little boy whose fantasy life, such as it is, must be quite bare'. The two tested the same in gross total scores.

Alan's mother re-asserted her view about his developing an internal sense of right and wrong. And Benjamin's mother continued to describe him as responsive to shame and filled with apologies.

Forty-seven to fifty-two months:

Observers reported what they described as a 'stunning' change in affect in the two boys: they both appeared more charming and in general showed a greater freedom in affective expression. By fifty-two months each was described as having a 'girl friend'. Film analyses were in agreement with the impression of enhanced emotional mobilization.

Other observations, however, continued to reflect the specific *thing-human* dispositions within each boy. Alan, for example, was described as having only two friends; Benjamin was reported to have a wide circle of peer relationships which were sustained despite rifts. Alan was described as more task-oriented and more oriented toward specific concrete endeavors in the outer world; Benjamin appeared more involved in fantasy and in his inner world. Alan's interactional system seemed restricted; he appeared to be in a constant and intense struggle with his mother. Furthermore, most observers were of the opinion that he seemed to have internalized many of her standards. He seemed to be afraid of her and was prone to act in the ways she anticipated of him even in her absence. Benjamin's interactional system was described as more widespread. He seemed able to evoke more responses from people and seemed freer in his emotional-affective interplay.

Fifty-six to sixty-two months:

Alan scored 121 on his psychological test. It was noted that he showed a greater discomfort with the more abstract verbal material, but his interest could be regained with more structured tasks. Asked to portray a figure, Alan drew 'a seventeen-year-old

female pumpkin' with a big head, big eyes, and especially prominent teeth. 'She is hiding something in back of her from her Daddy', he said. 'Something she got for him. A piece of candy and a box of cigarettes.' Other than this example evidenced in his psychological test, restriction in Alan's fantasy life and in his capacity for symbolization continued to be noted.

Benjamin scored 121 on his psychological test. He was described as very coöperative. 'Even between the items', the psychologist wrote, 'he made an effort to keep the interaction between the examiner and himself going. . .'. Asked to portray a figure, he drew a large figure with a diamond-shaped head, no facial features, and a long skinny rectangular-shaped neck and body. He put two sticks on for legs, but the arms were totally omitted. 'He is my cousin', Benjamin said, 'who is laying down in bed 'cause his father shot him. . .'. In reply to a question, Benjamin added that he did not know why the father had shot the boy; then he hastily noted that this was an 'imagination' and not something that really happened. He then thought about his cousin and remarked spontaneously, in an attempt to quickly establish differences, 'I'm just a little baby and I am lighter than him. . .'.

Alan's varying characteristics were summed up as follows. He was reported as having one friend and of having remarked sadly that he was a lonely boy. He tended to reserve his physical affection for animals, especially his dog; he appeared to be in a continuous and persistent power struggle with his mother; he seemed interested in cars and a specific highway game, and he showed a special interest in policemen. All observers felt that Alan seemed to be very much like his mother. Some expressed concern for the direction of his fundamental sexual identifications. And finally, it was noted that he had difficulty in unstructured and spontaneous conversations, frequently replying 'I don't know' or 'Nothing' to the questions of peers or adults.

Benjamin's traits were described in this fashion. A boy with wide peerships who shows a variegated and differentiated interactional system with different people; he fights with his mother

but shows genuine affection for her as well; he is inclined to be actively involved in daydreams. Observers felt that Benjamin appeared to be more like his father. He was also worried about physical injuries; at times he would come indoors to take off his trousers to inspect himself to see if he had been damaged during play. He also showed a sophisticated capacity to empathize with his friends and to attempt to understand their motives. At about this time, Benjamin's parents reported that he had begun bed wetting.

Seventy-two months:

At age six, Alan's WISC score was 99 and Benjamin's was 107. Alan did better on the performance part and showed weakness in verbal abstraction. Benjamin's scores were more even although he did somewhat better in the verbal section. In the subtests, Alan scored significantly higher in object assembly. Benjamin held up well especially in the categories of information, comprehension, and picture arrangements. The two were equivalent in arithmetical abilities, block design, and coding.

The human figure drawings markedly favored Benjamin. The drawings dramatically reflect the differing capacity of each boy to conceptualize and portray the human figure at six years of age. (See, Figures I and II.) However, it was noted that Alan's drawing of a house was more advanced than was Benjamin's.

In the TAT, although both told stories of twosomes and threesomes, Alan seemed more involved with descriptions of dyadic relationships and Benjamin with triadic ones. For example, Alan's responses to Cards 5 and 6 were these stories:

5. Two bears in a cave . . . resting and one of them has his head up. The big one is laying down with his eyes shut. . . . (?) Thinking about the other bear . . . his relatives. (?) I don't know.

6. Two other bears in a crib. . . . Sleeping and looking at each other . . . holding hands. . . . The relatives of the other bear. Living in a house.

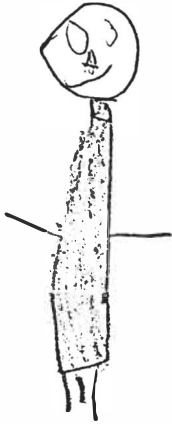


Fig. 1: Alan's Drawing

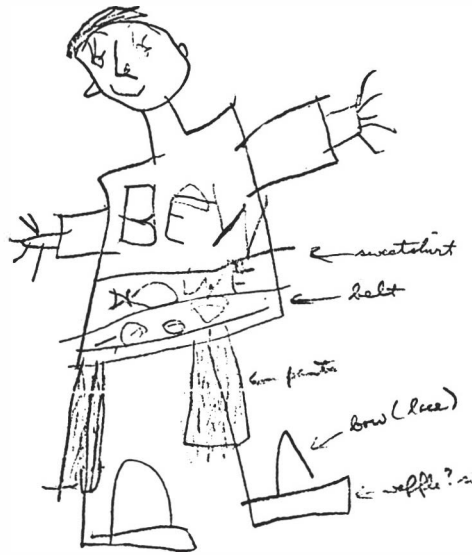


Fig. 2: Benjamin's Drawing

Benjamin's replies were these:

5. Cubs and a mommy bear and a daddy . . . in a cave. They're sleeping except for the baby bear . . . (?) sees a stick and a leaf . . . they make noise! [What kind?] I don't know.

6. Baby in a crib . . . mommy and daddy . . . baby bears . . . mommy and daddy still up . . . not in the room with the babies, talking. (?) let's go out the window. (?) Want to go out to play.

On the Rorschach, the two gave equivalent numbers of responses. Alan showed a greater interest in details and was involved with 'holes' and spaces. Most of his responses were animate but he had at least four inanimate ones and two anatomical responses. Benjamin showed many more popular responses than did Alan; all but one were animate. He showed an interest in protruberances, e.g., tails and noses. Alan's responses to Cards II and VI, for example, were:

II. 1: (turns card) I don't know . . . inside of a throat.

2: water dripping down (red at bottom).

VI. 1: some kind of bug . . . I don't know . . . crawling.

2: A pipeline going down here.

Benjamin's responses to the same cards were:

II. 1: Looks like something like in your body . . . a face of bones . . . looks like a nose.

2: Little bugs going across there and things sticking out here.

VI. 1: A funny bug or a wild cat. . . . Four legs and whiskers . . . a nose . . . killed or a stuffed one on the floor . . . laying down and feet out . . . doesn't look alive.

V

The discussion of this data will engage four issues: 1, general hypotheses about the category itself; 2, a description of other categories which appear to cluster regularly with either human- or thing-leanings; 3, a description of traits which appear to emerge quite apart from animate or inanimate object-disposition; and 4, notes on the influence of each orientation on evolving phases and functions.

HYPOTHESES

The hypothesis is offered that human-orientedness and thing-orientedness are reciprocally complementary characteristics. It is likely that an initial increase in one stream reduces the current available for the other. Each particular attribute seems to have its own developmental potentials. The implication is that each is equivalently adaptive providing neither is of an extreme degree. For example, the natural scientist and the social scientist each pursues his interests; the pleasures, rewards, and successes are contingent on many features other than merely the fundamental direction implied in each endeavor. The value of different milieus are such, however, that within any specific setting a tendency toward one leaning or another may be regarded as more worthy.

A second hypothesis may be stated as follows. When such a leaning appears, it may emerge as a variant relatively independent of the libidinal or aggressive strivings of infants and children, or of characteristic conflicts occurring at different developmental phases. Therefore if it does not exceed limits, the variant may be understood as influencing merely the channelization of drive expression and the experiencing and resolution of phase conflicts. No definite impression arises that such leanings are derivatives of shifts from body attitudes or are direct reflections of caretaker-child interactions. Thus, in this study there was no certain evidence that either disposition was imposed on infants by a specifically oriented milieu. In a particular foster home it was as likely that one leaning might occur as the other; similarly no clear correlation between adopted mothers and their children existed concerning these dispositions. If anything could be inferred at all, the method of matched samplings appears to have added further evidence to accumulating research data which suggest such leanings may have important congenital elements. The evidence of influence through the genetic code can be inferred from the literature on sex differences (Maccoby, 1966); the evidence of an intra-uterine determinant can be inferred from the work on the frequently recurring differences noted within sets of monozygotic twins (e.g., Allen, et al., 1971); in addition, there is evidence that paranatal factors may also play a role (Cohen, et al., 1972). Work in linguistics and certain neurological findings, cited earlier, add further weight to the 'constitutional' argument. Naturally, this in no way diminishes the possible influence or importance of situational factors in the development or accentuation of such leanings (see, Stern, 1971).

CLUSTERING OF FUNCTIONS

Other functions or tendencies of the personality appear regularly to cluster about an orientedness. It is still uncertain whether this is a result of chance, mutual influence, or some as yet unrecognized superordinate interlacing variable. A correlation exists, for example, between thing-orientedness and evi-

dence of early motor skills and strength. Thus, on a comparative basis in this study, thing-oriented children appear to be somewhat heavier and stronger than their 'person' counterparts, especially during infancy. Such gross motor differences seem to fade by the end of the first year of life. Fine motor abilities are generally equivalent. The infants more prone to thing-orientedness give the impression of a preference for sensory modalities of a distal sort, (e.g., vision, hearing) while those more human-oriented show a proclivity for proximal stimuli (e.g., touch, proprioception). Similarly, thing-oriented infants appear to carve out a wider span in space, visually at first and in their travels when they begin to crawl about, while the human-oriented infants show a narrower spatial frame of reference. Hence, and perhaps as a consequence of all of this, the former give the impression of outer-directedness while the latter—despite their attentiveness to persons—give an impression of an inward-directedness, at least in the beginning.

INDEPENDENT FUNCTIONS

Other attributes emerge and co-exist independent of either leaning. For example, certain basic physiological processes reflected in eating patterns and sleep cycles appear to have no correlations with either variance. Also, early developmental landmarks (such as the smile) occur at similar times in both, although maturational landmarks (e.g., motor development, teeth eruption, establishment of cerebral dominance) may vary considerably. To the degree that it is possible to assess it by the means employed in this study, the expressions of libidinal and aggressive striving appear equivalent in each grouping, albeit frequently channeled differently.

In addition, affective dispositions seem unrelated to either inclination; orchestration, intensity, and range of affect vary similarly within the two sets observed. However, while a member of the first may show a profound affective engagement with possessions, someone in the second may show it with people.

Certain cognitive proclivities emerge at similar times, al-

though here, too, they may be deployed differently. One is the function of differentiation; it may reflect itself in a greater ability to distinguish assorted items in the first group, while the second is developing a firmer competence in distinguishing the subtleties of affective meanings in the human face.

The capacity for situational adaptability also moves in its own autonomous direction, although a thing-oriented child may be more readily diverted by a variety of stimulating circumstances which permit the expression of his curiosity while his person-oriented counterpart is more reactive to human contact. Both may be active initiators of the object world, but while the one is more active in respect to the exploration and the manipulation of items and possessions, the other initiates more exchanges with people while assuming what is frequently described as a 'passive-receptive' relationship to them.

And finally transitional phenomena appear as often in each disposition as do interests in the nonhuman animate world of pets; apparently a plushy teddy bear or the family dog can be a bridge not only from 'outside' to 'inside' but from either orientation to the other.

TRANSFORMATIONS AND INFLUENCES

When more complex functions evolve, the earlier leanings continue to cast their influence on further development in clear, at times even dramatic fashion. Although certain cognitive capacities appear similar at first (albeit deployed differently), consistently the more thing-oriented infants move forward toward a surer development of certain conceptual abilities, while human-oriented infants deploy toward interactional skills. Similarly, although the separation-individuation phase may unfold parallel in both, a more human-disposed child usually shows a slightly earlier onset, a more specific and direct responsiveness, and greater evidence of practicing during the separation experience. The more thing-oriented child shows a greater freedom in exploration and a giftedness in coördinating activities and in play with toys which seems to make him more capable of en-

gaging functional procedures toward the goal of effecting individuation. However, the final achievement of the separation-individuation process appears equivalent in both.

When affects which presage functions of regulation and inhibition become differentiated, the child with thing-oriented leanings seems more involved with struggles in self-control; he may have a tendency toward an earlier internalization of rules and standards. The child with human-oriented leanings may be more responsive to the affect of embarrassment; his controls appear to be built more on the products of relationships.

Training issues are characterized essentially as 'tasks' for the more thing-oriented child; for the human-disposed infant, they are characterized as acts in the spectrum of approval or disapproval. Task-orientation and achievement-orientation soon move on toward still further proclivity for exploratory pre-occupations and work interests in the first group along with an apparent enhancement of certain cognitive traits involving coördination, assembly, concepts of inside and outside, as well as other conceptual skills; the second group becomes more involved with situational activities replete with role assignments and thrusts toward fantasy. Playing 'house' typifies the latter. In effect, a preoccupation with processes and functions occupies the first group; imagination and interactions, the second.

Speech also is clearly and regularly influenced by such leanings—an early trend toward thing-naming in the first, an early drift toward people-naming in the second, together with a greater interactional speech. And, the more thing-oriented child is inclined to show earlier evidence of the establishment of cerebral dominance as manifested, for example, by the assertion of handedness.

If earlier impressions were that the more thing-oriented children are more outer-directed, by the third year of life they appeared more inclined to be motivated by inner determinants and resources, a distinction which seems to persist thereafter.

Thing-orientedness and human-orientedness also cast their impact on the surrounding milieu. As parents adapt themselves

to the proclivities of their infants, quite early the parents of the first group discover that 'fussiness' can be diminished and distractions achieved by offering 'things' for inspection and engagement; parents of the second group, on the other hand, discover that they need to offer themselves. When seeking to assert their authority or impose controls, each parent group knows precisely what affective string to pluck and what kind of threat to pose. The dispositions of infants are re-enforced in the milieu, as implements in evolving strategies are cycled back into the psychologic system, and thus inevitably emerge as traits of character.

SUMMARY

This paper describes individual variations of inclinations either toward the human-world or toward the inanimate-world. Because the material is based on an intensive longitudinal study involving only small numbers, despite more than a decade of systematically accumulated data our impressions must still be regarded as preliminary. The fate of these variations appear diverse. 1. A continuous influence of one leaning or the other may make itself known directly by a persistence of orientedness reflected in style, symptoms, or traits of character. 2. The inclination may also make itself known indirectly, through impact on other involving functions, e.g., task-orientation and enhanced cognitive development on the one hand, or interactional skills and a propensity for the imaginative on the other. 3. Later phase organizations and concomitant reintegrations and transformations of functions and processes may erase or shift the dispositions altogether because of adaptive, defensive, or developmental pressures, or as a consequence of environmental insistence.

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